

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Executive Summary (500 words)

- *Attach extended description*

A bold re-imagining of Whiting's shoreline will fulfill the vision of the Marquette Plan, enhance public access to the Lake, and serve as a catalyst to economic development.

Currently, the shoreline of Whiting's Lakefront Park largely prevents public access to the water. Although a pier is extended during warmer months, a water's-edge barrier of "riprap" (a loose assemblage of broken stone and concrete) denies access to the Lake. Immediately inland of the riprap, a gravel parking lot stretches the width of the Whiting's shore and extends back to Front Street, the road that passes through the Park. In its present configuration, "green space" in Whiting Park is 150 feet away from the Lake at the closest point and over 400 feet away at the furthest point.

The proposed Lakefront Project seeks to remedy this situation by leveraging public and private resources in the following sequence of activities, which build on extensive due diligence conducted primarily by the Army Corps of Engineers to determine the feasibility of lakeshore development.

Phase I (0-18 months):

A necessary first step, the initial phase of the Lakefront Project lays the groundwork for all that is to follow. At present, funding requests are restricted to this phase.

Infrastructure

The Lakefront Park's infrastructure reflects the values of an era in which public access and convenience was not a priority concern. As a result, inadequate restroom facilities and poor lighting prohibit greater use and enjoyment of the Park. Currently, no gas or sewage lines exist. Infrastructure improvements in the form of new water, electrical, gas and sewage lines will be run to rectify these inadequacies.

Planning

The City will update its Comprehensive Plan, which currently lacks any contemplation of either lakefront or economic development. This update will engage the public and will be in concert with the ideals set forth in the Marquette Plan. This update will also provide a roadmap for the work to be completed in later phases described below.

Bike & Pedestrian Trail

A 5 mile circuit through the Whiting-Robertsdale area will provide a great number of access points to the lakefront. A multitude of activity generators (including schools, parks, and businesses) are encompassed along the route. This trail is a local component of a larger regional system, connecting the Whiting segment to Hammond's Lake George trail and Lake County's Whihala Beach trail. Future plans to enhance existing Hammond trails will link the proposed path to the City of Chicago's trail system. Right-of-way has been set aside for a spur to accommodate connection to a future East Chicago trail.

Phase II (18 to 36 months):

Details of this phase, the centerpiece of the Lakefront Project, will emerge from the planning process that precedes it. Phases II, III & IV are not contemplated in the current request for funding.

Shoreline Enhancement

Immediately following the planning phase, significant shoreline enhancement will begin. In keeping with the spirit of the Marquette Plan, riprap will be removed and replaced with a slopestone revetment that allows for a pedestrian boardwalk along the water's edge, the parking lot will be moved to a more suitable location, and dilapidated structures along the lakefront will be renovated and/or demolished. Amenities to increase access, usage and enjoyment of the Lakefront Park will be developed.

Whihala Beach Partnership

Adjacent to Whiting's Lakefront Park is Whihala Beach, a mile-long sandy expanse operated by the Lake County Parks Department. Whihala Beach features a boat launch that, unfortunately, succumbs to shifting sands which frequently render the facility unusable. Envisioned is a partnership that would allow for expansion and re-construction of this launch in order to provide for greater recreational use.

Phase III (3 to 5 years):

This phase of construction will build upon work completed in earlier phases. It is envisioned that these projects will strengthen links to the lakefront and capitalize upon the development opportunities presented through shoreline enhancement.

Front Street Corridor

The development of a Front Street Corridor will strengthen links to the Lake from the Downtown Business District and Standard Diamond Park. This area will provide excellent opportunities for lakefront-related commercial development. To accomplish this corridor, relocating the Public Works Facility and developing other properties near the area will occur.

Standard Diamonds Recreation Center

Standard Diamond Park will be greatly enhanced and linked directly to the shoreline via the Bike Trail and Front Street Corridor. Developing a more robust Recreation Center at Standard Diamonds will require a removal of the Water Filtration Plant and a consideration of land acquisition from BP.

Phase IV (5 to 10 years):

Lakefront Marina

Envisioned as the culmination of the Lakefront Project, a marina will serve as a significant economic development catalyst. The location of the marina will be determined in collaboration with BP (who owns a stretch of shoreline adjacent to Lakefront Park) when their \$4B expansion project is complete.

ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

Executive Summary (250 words)

- *Attach extended economic impact analysis, citing quantitative data including projected impact on jobs and salaries, goods and services purchased in Northwest Indiana, population growth, and so on. Include a description of methodology.*

“The Marquette Greenway Plan...will add 39,000 jobs to the regional economy and increase net new economic development activity by \$38.9 Billion over the next 40 years.”

--NWI Regional Development Authority
Comprehensive Economic Development Plan
January 9, 2007

The proposed project represents Whiting's contribution to the transformative nature of the Marquette Plan. Building on Whiting's distinct location and character, the Lakefront Project will serve as a public/private catalyst to commercial development, destination development and residential reinvestment.

Commercial Development

Mixed-use commercial development envisioned in the project will occur primarily along the Front Street corridor. Destination retail and recreational opportunities will seamlessly extend a downtown business district to the lakefront. The immediate impact of this growth will encompass employment opportunities in construction, service and management sectors.

Commercial development builds upon the \$7M investment made in the reconstruction of Standard Avenue, a key thoroughfare that links thousands of BP employees and contractors to Front Street and the downtown business district.

Destination Development

Through the development of multiple destination options—including lakeside facilities, water-based recreational opportunities and niche retail establishments—the project will continue to strengthen Whiting as a destination location.

Destination development builds upon the hundreds of thousands of visitors that currently come to Whiting to enjoy Pierogifest, Whihala Beach, Summer with the Symphony and a host of other recreational and cultural opportunities.

Residential Reinvestment

Nearly three quarters of Whiting's housing stock was constructed prior to 1939, with a great number of these homes standing now for over a century. In general, these houses are well-maintained and structurally sound. However, these homes reflect an opportunity for reinvestment by a population drawn to the amenities proposed in the project.

Residential reinvestment would build upon the multimillion dollar investment made in the Center Street Project—a single family home and condominium development along a vacated rail corridor just a block away from Whiting Park.

The totality of this development and reinvestment will create a significantly positive impact. Enhanced residential opportunities, a more attractive and accessible shoreline, increased commercial potential and more fully developed amenities will increase the quality of life and desirability of Whiting. Coupling lakefront development to community development is part of Whiting's long-term economic development strategy and represents a greater contribution to a more robust regional economy.

QUALITY OF LIFE IMPACT STATEMENT

Executive Summary (250 words)

- *Attach an extended analysis of the projected impact on the project on the environment in Northwest Indiana. Also provide an analysis of the potential of the project to improve social circumstances for residents of Northwest Indiana. Include a description of the methodology.*

Whiting was developed as an industrial town for Standard Oil employees in 1889. As understandings of environmental stewardship have evolved over the past 119 years, both the refinery and the City have made great strides toward improving our collective impact on the environment. The Whiting Lakefront Project embodies a deep commitment to the Marquette Plan's ideal by reclaiming significant tracts of shoreline and industrial land for greenspace and public use.

Beyond a greening of the City of Whiting, other quality of life indicators are significantly enhanced by this project. Quality of life for Northwest Indiana residents is positively enhanced by providing greater access to the Lake through recreational activities; bike trails provide for greater health and wellness opportunities; economic development provides greater probability for meaningful employment.

FUNDING REQUEST AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Federal:	\$1,400,000
State:	-0-
Regional (RDA request):	\$2,563,225
Local:	\$590,000
Private Investment (BP):	\$350,000

Total Project cost: \$4,903,225

DETAILED REQUEST TO THE RDA

- *Attach a detailed explanation of the request from the board. Is the request for a specific part of a larger project and if so, define the specific project.*

Whiting Lakefront Project
Submitted to the Regional Development Authority
25 March 2008

*Is the request for an outright grant, a loan, an investment to be repaid.
Indicate the required flow of funds (single/multiple years). If bonds are to
be issued, are they to be issued by the applicant, the RDA or a third party?
Indicate the terms of guarantees and repayment by the Applicant by year.*

The City of Whiting requests a single grant payment for Phase I of the Lakefront Project. The grant request to the RDA in the amount of \$2,563,225 will be expended in the following manner:

Comprehensive Planning: \$342,500

An estimate for updating the City's Comprehensive Plan to include lakefront and economic development is included in Appendix A of this application. The totality of Whiting will be reviewed and contemplated in the Comprehensive Plan update to ensure maximized opportunities for lakefront access and associated economic development. The request to the RDA represents funding 100% of this component.

Infrastructure: \$450,075

A breakdown of the costs associated with providing gas, water, electrical and sewage service to Whiting Park is included in Appendix A of this application. The request to the RDA represents funding 25% of this component. These monies, along with funding from BP, constitutes the local match to federally appropriated dollars.

Bike and Pedestrian Trail: \$1,770,650

An estimate for land acquisition, engineering, planning and construction of a bike and pedestrian trail is included in Appendix A of this application. The request to the RDA represents funding 100% of this component.

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF OTHER FUNDING

- *Attach a detailed explanation of the funds from other sources. The amount of financing received or promised from each source, its nature (bonds, loans, grants...) and full payment information.*

Federal Appropriations: \$1,400,000

Federal appropriations totaling \$1.4M have been received. Of this total, \$400,000 was received by the Army Corps of Engineers to complete feasibility work. The remaining \$1,000,000 will be invested in providing gas, water, electrical and sewage service to Whiting Park.

City of Whiting: \$590,000

The City of Whiting has invested \$590,000 to complete the due diligence necessary to proceed with lakefront development. Of this money, \$475,000 was received by the Army Corps of Engineers to complete feasibility work. One hundred thousand dollars was received by Skipper Marine to provide the same. An additional \$15,000 was received by the University of Illinois at Chicago to provide for a land-use planning study. Copies of these reports are available at the request of the RDA.

BP North America: \$350,000

BP has pledged a total of \$350,000 toward the completion of Phase I. Restricted to infrastructure work, this pledge is noted in the letter of support included with the application.

PROJECT TIMELINE

- *Identify the start date, completion date and significant milestones for the specific project.*

Preliminary feasibility work associated with the due diligence necessary for considering this project was begun in 2005 and has been completed.

The component of Phase I that contemplates an update of the City's Comprehensive Plan will begin in April 2008 and will be completed by year's end.

The component of Phase I that contemplates running infrastructure into Whiting Park to facilitate lakefront development will begin at the start of the construction season in 2008 and should be completed by year's end.

The component of Phase I that contemplates a bike and pedestrian trail will begin in April of 2008. Land acquisition, engineering, planning will occur over the course of summer and early fall 2008, with construction anticipated beginning prior to the close of the season. Completion of construction will occur in 2009.

A timetable for the Whiting Lakefront Project is found in Appendix C.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

DOCUMENTARY SUPPORT

- *Attach unabridged copies of all studies, reports, surveys and other documents supporting this application.*

Please refer to Appendix A for documentary support related to the costs associated with Phase I of the Whiting Lakefront Project. Included are cost estimates relating to the bike and pedestrian trail from SEH, cost estimates relating to the Comprehensive Plan update from American Structurepoint, and cost estimates relating to infrastructure improvements from the Army Corps of Engineers. An aerial photograph with proposed trail routes is included in Appendix C.

Please refer to Appendix B for documentary evidence of support from Congressman Peter J. Visclosky, BP North America and the Lake County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Please refer to Appendix C for materials that were presented to the RDA during the workshop session held on 6 March 2008. Also included in this Appendix is a timetable outlining the Whiting Lakefront Project.

Please refer to Appendix D for a copy of the ethics guidelines to which the City of Whiting adheres and the resolution of the Whiting Common Council to enact this code.

RELATED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

- *Attach a statement of the relationship, if any, between this project and any other existing or proposed economic development project for Northwest Indiana.*

Whiting's Lakefront Project complements existing investment in the Marquette Plan. The City joins efforts already underway in Portage, East Chicago, Gary and Hammond to accomplish the transformative vision expressed in the Plan. In completing this local component, broad regional linkages are created and strengthened. The individual efforts of each community enhance the collective whole. As a result, a transformed shoreline will profoundly and positively shape the entire region—the ultimate goal of the Marquette Plan.

Beyond development associated with the Marquette Plan, the Lakefront Project also relates to BP's Operation Canadian Crude (OCC). The OCC is an investment in excess of \$3B, and is purportedly the largest economic development project in the State of Indiana's recent history. OCC will employ over 4,000 people during the estimated 7 year arc of the refinery's expansion and conversion. This project is not only an economic boon for Northwest Indiana, but for the nation as a whole, reducing the country's reliance on oil from an unstable region of the globe.

The BP Whiting Business Unit is a major stakeholder in this community. As such, the City looks forward to working with the refinery in a mutually-beneficial way. Timing for Phases III and IV of the Lakefront Project reflects a cognizance of OCC's vast regional importance and respects the needs associated with expansion. As development of both the lakefront and the refinery progress, our relationship will look to develop solutions for financial and land utilization aspects of this Project.

RELATIONSHIP DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

- *Attach any disclosure statements regarding relationships you may have with RDA board members or employees.*

There are no known financial or familial relationships between the Lakefront Project team and the RDA board or its employees.

ETHICS GUIDELINES

- *Attach a copy of the ethics guidelines to which the applicant adheres.*

On February 5th, 2008, the Common Council of Whiting resolved to become the first non-founding member to join the communities of Munster, Highland and Crown Point in a regional ethics organization. Common Council Resolution 2008-02 and the code of ethics to which the City adheres is contained in Appendix D. Prior to this action, the City adhered to an ethics code passed by the Council in 2004.